THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various, that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, may be indulged—Cowp.

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ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For The Port Folio.

TRAVELS.

LETTERS FROM GENEVA AND FRANCE.

Written during a residence of between two and three years in different parts of those countries, and addressed to a lady in Virginia.

(*Continued from page* 293.)

LETTER LIV.

ONE short excursion more, my dear daughter, and then we bid adieu to Geneva. As the weather became cooler in the Autumn and the beauties of our prospect were fading away, we determined to diversify the scene by a visit to Annecy, which you will easily find on the map of Savoy. It lies a little to the left of the road. F. and I had travelled along on the way to Turin, which has attracted some attention from Rousseau's description of the life he led there, and of his first interview with Madame de Warens. It possesses a thousand better claims to attention than from that circumstance, and has been the residence of far better people than either Rousseau or Madame de Warens; but I question if one person in a hundred would have known of such a place, had it not been for the description I allude to.

We began to ascend, shortly after leaving Geneva, and were in a few hours on the top of Mount Sion, which is the lowest of the mountains that surround the Lake; it served, probably, as a waste-way to the waters of the great lake in ancient times, before a passage had been burst at l'Ecluse, and this idea, which is M. de Saussure's, is confirmed by the number of smooth pebbles on the summit of the ascent, and the rapid declivity on the other side.

We here stopped for a moment to look back on the country behind us; upon the lake, upon the city, and upon the environs, and then proceeded towards a place, at the extremity of Saleve, where a long and hollow passage, formed by the torrents of former days, and

which is said to have been the repair of a troop of smugglers and banditti in the last century, is now the seat of a poor and peaceful Savoyard village. I should have observed to you, that on the slope between Mount Sion and Saleve, on the side towards Geneva, is an ancient Chartreux, where the monks of St. Bruno formerly cultivated a flourishing farm, and sung psalms and said their prayers, and bestowed the overplus, which their simple wants could spare, on the poor of the neighbourhood. It is now a brewery, and I cannot find that either the morals, or the worldly prosperity of the country, have been in any degree benefited by the change.

The invectives to be met with in so many books, and in the conversation of so many people, against the idleness and luxury of the regular clergy of France, always remind me of the Englishman Dr. Moore speaks of, at Naples, who, talking of what he is to have for supper in town, after an ample dinner in the country, inveighs from a warm post-chaise, against the sloth and gormandizing spirit of two barefooted Carmelites.

Be assured, that in the abolishment of those various orders, and in the confiscation of their property, there has been a great deal of useless cruelty and oppression. The first establishments, made by pious enthusiasts and their followers, were in the nature of colonies sent out into a wild and desert country, where some of the monks, who laboured with their own hands took off, by degrees, the dishonour which had been ignorantly attached to the idea of manual industry, and others were employed in copying the literary productions of former times, while the bell which invited the neighbouring barbarians to prayers, at certain hours, amused and softened their minds with the pomp of worship, blended with the charms of musick, and raised them to a sense of their moral duties. We smile at the simplicity of our European ancestors, who were soon prevailed upon, in the neighbourhood of these religious colonies, to respect, in a particular manner, those days, which had been consecrated, as it was supposed, by the last mysteries of the life of Christ: but if as Hume (no prejudiced man in favour of revealed religion) observes, if some respite to the miseries of mankind was procured, if time was thus given for the angry passions of hostile chieftains to cool; superstition, if such it must be called, rendered, in this instance, a service to society, which philosophy might be proud to claim. But gratitude towards our benefactors is not the virtue of these latter days, when a cold-hearted system of calculation has, in so many instances, got the better of right and justice. What would be thought in America, if our government were some centuries hence, to assert that they had a right to confiscate the property of the Swiss colonists, who are now establishing themselves in some part of our western territory, on pretence of their having paid but a small price, or perhaps no price at all, for an extensive tract of fertile soil, and were to reproach them for possessing those vallies and hill sides, which the industry of their ancestors had converted into wheat-fields, or covered with vines? But let us return from a digression, which, warmed by the spirit of Chateaubriant, I could make a volume of, and proceed on our way to Annecy.

The country becomes flat in the neighbourhood of the town: it was formerly, no doubt, covered by the waters of the lake, before they were diminished by some convulsion of nature; or the river, by which they vent themselves had formed so deep a channel; they are now shrunk to a space of about fourteen miles in length, by from two to five or six in breadth, and surrounded by gentle hills, interspersed with villages, and chateaus, and cornfields, and vineyards. The town contains nearly five thousand souls: it is ill-built and dark. In former times, that is to say, before the revolution, it used to be enlivened by the sort of court, which the Bishop, who still retained the title of Bishop of Geneva, held there, and by the residence of several families of nobility: the demand, too, which was occasioned for the necessaries of life, by the number of wealthy convents, occasioned an appearance of trade; but the Bishop has been withdrawn to another part of Savoy; the nobility are scattered and ruined, and the convents have been changed into gloomy warehouses, or converted to other purposes. One of them, and I am sorry it should be that of the poor sisters of St. Clair, whose story you have not, I hope, forgotten, has, however, been applied to no unworthy purpose. It has become the seat of a flourishing manufactory of cotton, where three hundred persons are employed, and where the undertaker hopes soon to employ eight hundred. He had just finished the water-case for his large wheel, and paved it with the tomb-stones of the abbesses of former days. I could not help thinking how astonished future antiquarians will be, if any accident should bring these tomb-stones to their knowledge, when the hand of time shall have swept away the manufactory, and all that remember it, and what a system of geology would be built upon such a notable discovery.

Annecy was known to the Romans; and it is supposed that the vent for a part of the waters of the lake, which are led through the town, and are made to serve many useful ends, is a work for which the inhabitants of succeeding times have been indebted to them. I was struck with the size and appearance of the house Madame de Warens inhabited. A bookseller had directed me to the street, and a little girl, who stepped out of a neighbouring shop, told me all the rest. But I could not make out Rousseau's description of the spot where the interview took place. The rivulet, which he places to the right, is to the left; and there must be some errour of the Press, unless he meant to the right of the lady, who had turned to speak to him. I took notice of the private door, through which she must have passed on her way to mass: it has been closed for many years, and is incumbered with ruins. The castle, in which the Counts of the Genevois resided some centuries ago, and which has been since, for a time, occupied by the Bishop, now serves partly as a prison, and partly as barracks for passing detachments of the army. It is gloomy and spacious, with prodigiously thick walls, and has all the appearance of having been designed for defence as well as shelter.

There were formerly, I was told, twenty-five carriages kept in Annecy, but now there is not one; so that the first people of the present day have, at least, the merit of not being ostentatious; they are composed, indeed, of what Mr.

Burke, in his vehement flow of eloquence, calls the "inferiour, unlearned, mechanical, and merely instrumental professours of the law, stewards of petty local jurisdictions, the fomenters and conductors of municipal litigation, and village vexation."

Of the families of Savoyan nobility, who have been ruined by the revolution, no one was more distinguished than that of the Marquis de Salles, a descendant of the ancient and princely house of Nemours. The two last males of this noble family, the father and the son, both died in the service of their sovereign, and the widow, like the mother of Thomson's Lavinia, lives in some obscure retirement, with a beautiful daughter, whom I have seen. Their residence was occasionally at Annecy, but generally at the castle of Douing, a noble mansion built on a peninsula of the lake, with spacious gardens, rising in terraces, as at Isola Bella, and commanding a still more variegated prospect. Our conductor pointed out to us several castles in the neighbourhood, some of which were bosomed high in tufted trees, that had been the property of the Marquis, and he led us over the house, which is large and commodious, and then into a musick-room, which is detached from the main building, and seems to hang over the lake:—the Marquis had erected it for his daughter, at the commencement of the revolution, and I can conceive the pleasure he promised himself from the use of it.

As I walked along the terrace, and admired the neighbouring hill sides, which are ragged and rocky at their extremities, but which end in vineyards, and in a gentle slope towards the water, and beheld the large fish, the monsters of these deeps, which seemed slumbering in the bosom of the lake below, and figured to myself the agreeable variety, which must once or twice a week be occasioned by a fleet of market boats under full sail, on their way to Annecy, or dispersed, as they frequently are, by a sudden gust from the north-east, I could not but give way to something like a wish, that it had pleased Providence to make me lord of such a property; it seemed to N. that she could pass her life there.

The celebrated St. François de Salles, who lived in the century before the last, was of this family. He was a person of mild manners, of great good sense, and of never-ceasing benevolence. His letters contain very good and very liberal advice on many interesting occasions. He closed a long and useful life, by a death of pious resignation, and miracles were so clearly proved to have been worked at his tomb, that the Pope could not, in justice, but make a saint of him. It is really affecting, that man, frail, foolish, ignorant man, should thus presume to marshal the ranks of heaven, and assign places there, with as much confidence as the master of the ceremonies does at a watering-place in England. A Bishop of the family of Tonnerre wished, it is said, to have carried the distinction very far, indeed. He thought it hard that vulgar saints should be placed as conspicuously in heaven as those who were born gentlemen, and who had, in particular, the advantage of being allied to the noble house of Tonnerre. Madame de Chantale, grandmother of Madame de Sevignè, was the friend and pupil of this worthy saint, and passed a part of her life at Anne-

cy; it was by his advice, and under his directions, that she founded her order of the Visitation.

There is a great deal in this lady's life that you would read with pleasure. Richardson had read it I am persuaded, and had his mind full of Madame de Chantale, when he describes the persecutions which Clarissa endured from her family, and the arrangements of Pamela's household.

It was her misfortune to lose her husband, whom she tenderly loved, and whose circumstances she had retrieved by her spirit of good order and economy, at a very early period: and her mind seems never to have recovered the shock. She was just and generous towards her children, but resolute in opposition to their opinion, in following what she thought the inspirations of heaven; and when her only son threw himself along the threshold of the door, to prevent her going out, upon some religious occasion, she calmly stept over his body, and pursued her purpose.

It is not a little singular, or it is perhaps not at all so, for I am very uncertain which, that at a time, when she seems to have been particularly desirous of mortifying her senses, by attending the sick and the poor on the most humiliating occasions, when she had, by a painful operation, and in order to drive away all terrestrial thoughts, impressed the figure of the cross upon her breast, she attracted her Director's attention, and drew a gentle reproof from him, by the fineness of her linen, and the gracefulness, with which her hair was collected under her cap.

She survived the saint many years, and as miracles were worked at her tomb also, to say nothing of the many cures she had effected by her prayers during her life, she was beatified under the name of the blessed Mother of Chantale. What the precise difference is between beatification and canonization, I am at a loss to tell you.

As we returned from Douing to Annecy, along the borders of the lake, we saw two or three of the boats of the country, making head against the Bise, in a very bungling manner: their oars were long poles with pieces of board, about six inches square nailed on near the extremity; so as to oppose some resistance to the water; it was the very infancy of navigation. On the opposite side, were several ancient castles, and among them there was the castle of Menthon, the birth-place of the great St. Barnard de Menthon, whom I am proud to have the honour of intrcducing to your acquaintance.

For The Port Folio.

POLITE LITERATURE.

MR. OLDSCHOOL,

With reluctance, I again appear before the readers of The Port Folio, in vindication.

When I assumed the task of examining the defects of the Ode, signed Carlos, I regarded my labour as justice to myself. Having employed some leisure hours in translating the Treatise on Oriental Poetry, from which Carlos had taken his subject, I considered myself entitled to censure faults, where faults were apparent. How far I have succeeded, the acknowledgment of Carlos himself is a candid avowal. Throughout his answer to my Criticism, he testifies the justice of my strictures, by repeated thanks; but at the same time, endeavours to excuse *his* faults, by citing what he looks upon as *my own*.

In the commencement of my remarks, I asserted, that in many places, Carlos had not sufficiently explained his authour. To support this assertion, I had recourse to my own version of the Ode in question; not to be considered as a criterion in poetry, but merely to exhibit to the publick in what manner the Gazel of Hafiz was rendered by the translator of the Treatise of Sir William Jones. Had Carlos translated from the *original*, he would have been justified in attributing to his authour that meaning which in his own opinion was most correct: but in availing himself of my translation, he in fact challenged my observations.

I accuse him of tautology, and he shields himself under the line

Again *fill* to the sparkling goblet's *brim*.

I will cite from the master poet in my vindication,

And he will *fill* thy wishes to the *brim*, with principalities.
Shaks. Ant. and Cleop. Act 3, *sc. XI.*

Filling a cup, until it will *hold no more*, I again assert, is tautology. The expression implies that you may *fill* the cup, but you must pour again, *until* it will *hold no more*. With Shakspeare to support me, I submit my line to the test of criticism: and even should I be found incorrect, Carlos cannot boast of being exculpated: for although I am ever ready to acknowledge that two negatives make an affirmative, yet I cannot agree with him, that *two* wrongs will make *one* right.

'Tis wine *heals* the hearts of the young and the old.

What is the obvious meaning of this line? Wine *heals* the *heart*, whether it have a *malady* or not: this was the purport of my first remark; and had Carlos understood it, he would not have convicted himself in his reply:

And wine is remedy for every ill:

Here, Carlos says, is a liberal range for ridicule! Were it even to be understood in the light which Carlos requires, still it would be consonant with the original:

Apporte du vin, le remède contre l'amour. Le vin guérit les *maladies* des jeunes et des vieux.

Hafiz means, that by drinking, a pleasing oblivion of *all care and pain* will ensue. Certainly he does not restrict the influence of wine, and confine it merely to operate as a balm on the *love-sick heart*.

The wine and the cup are the sun and the moon:

This is my own language in the *prose* translation. Carlos has not scrupled to introduce it, and now tells me, "if it be tame, my translation is tame!" This is indeed replication worthy of his pen. I censure the line as *prosaick*, devoid of the beauty of *poetry*, and he attempts to justify it, by acknowledging that it is my own *prose* translation!

Carlos seems to exult that he has caught me tripping in some of my lines, composed of monosyllables. "Here we are superlatively unhappy in disappointing our critick." I never censured the heroick verse of five Iambick feet, though composed of monosyllables. Of this verse our best poets are replete with examples. But *eleven* low words cannot be countenanced in that poetry where *ten* are often considered as a beauty.

Haste, bring the moon that she may with us shine:

That is, wisely observes our *would-be-critick*, shine in conjunction with us. This remark is indeed *puerile*. As Carlos does not understand the

meaning of the line, I will endeavour to render it comprehensible to him.

A friend of Carlos meets an acquaintance in the street, and thus addresses him: "Carlos has been *with* Mr. Oldschool (*i. e. not in conjunction with him*) he was not very brilliant in his remarks, but he dines *with* our club today. I hope he may *shine with us*, although he did not in The Port Folio."

Memory had forsaken Carlos, when he accused me of impropriety, for "ushering the bright god of day into a Persian song." The Persians, *perhaps Hafiz did not suspect it*, worshipped the rising *sun*, as their *god*, and the expression is undoubtedly justifiable.

I agree with Carlos, that by some wonderful revolution in the animal creation, there might be a *male nightingale:* but in English Poetry, I contend, the nightingale is always considered as feminine. Had Carlos any acquaintance with Oriental writings, he would have known that their authours make even the sun and moon masculine or feminine, as it suits their metaphor;* therefore the fable of the Nightingale and the Rose, is no evidence in his favour.

When Carlos spoke of a lute ringing, I thought him incorrect, but when he appeals to an organ, I find him still more blamable. The violin and lute may vibrate, and produce harmony, but I cannot suppose *ringing* an applicable term.

I again assert, although Carlos calls it cavilling, that Fate and Fortune are not synonymous. Fate is fixed and *unchangeable;* yet he says,

Mourn not for a moment the *changes* of fate.

Fortune may change from evil to good.

Let roses fade, their beauties will not dwell.

Dwell means to *live*, to *remain.* Yet Carlos tells me "*scratch* a little sense into this line." Indeed, I can scarcely stoop to answer this petty remark, and the following:

Can all the roses of the world excel.

Carlos here asks, "excel in what?" Were the rose allowed to possess other qualities than beauty of colour and fragrance of scent, the question would be proper. But the line conveys the following idea to every mind, except that of Carlos, which I conceive to be clouded with misinterpretation.

The rose possesses fragrance and beauty;
Wine is more fragrant and of higher colour than roses,
Therefore, wine can excel the rose.

Carlos blames my line of

Again fill to the sparkling goblet's brim,

and endeavours to amend the asperities of my quotation, by writing,

Again the bowl *replenish* to the brim.

Spirit of criticism! this is amending with a vengeance. Let Carlos listen to the interpretation of *replenish;*

Again the bowl *fill again* to the brim.

Carlos observes, that he does not wish the ninth stanza restored, because, forsooth, *he* has omitted it in *his* version.

Sir William Jones has had the misfortune to differ from Carlos, in his versification of the ten odes at the end of the Treatise:

Contre ma frénétique ivresse,
Quels ecours pourroit-on trouver?
Verser, verser, du vin sans-cesse
Est le moyen de me sauver.

I have preserved it, beginning

Against each act when frenzy seized my soul,

* See Bahar Danush, vol. 1, p. 131.

and do not think that I am as culpable in exhibiting as Carlos is in concealing.

Carlos was censured for a departure from his authour in writing,

I shall kiss my beloved's white breast in my sleep;

This censure he calls "too puerile to deserve an answer." And is this all the vindication he offers? Again I throw down the gauntlet and condemn his version. Let him defend, in a manner more satisfactory to his readers, a sentiment foreign to his authour.

And, deaf to prayers, refuse thy fervent suit.

Here again Carlos displays wonderful erudition, in finding out a meaning which never was intended, by the welcome aid of an *Id Est.* Hence with such criticism! if youth be his excuse, I may say, with Shakspeare,

I would there were no age between ten and three-and-twenty.

I conclude with observing, that I have as much repugnance to a paper war as Carlos has to a metaphysical discussion.

W. R. S.

For The Port Folio.

NEW BIOGRAPHY

Of Dr. Samuel Johnson.

To adopt Dr. Johnson's own phrase, notwithstanding the *penury*, of English biography, *his* life has been so copiously, and so variously written, that scarcely the minutest incident has escaped the vigilance of his foes, or the diligence of his friends. From the pert loquacity of Mistress Piozzi, the elaborate formality of Sir John Hawkins, the lively chit-chat of Arthur Murphy, the biassed narrative of Towers, and the perfect record of that *honest chronicler*, James Boswell, down to pamphlets, magazines, and the humblest pages of Grub-street literature, every reader has been conducted, by a sort of regular gradation. About two years since, a despicable volume made its appearance in London, for no other purpose than to detail the most trivial particulars of his infancy. Prefixed to the new and excellent *octavo* edition of the Dictionary, Dr. Aikin, with his usual ability, has written an elegant memoir of the great philologer's life, but not without a deep tincture of the prejudice of party. After this, despairing of the *promised* biography of his friend, by the celebrated Bennet Langton, we concluded that every avenue to new information was either filled, or closed. But to a new and very beautiful edition of his inimitable Rasselas, now on our table, there is added a *new* biography of its illustrious authour. As this contains a small, but spirited sketch, of Johnson's eventful life, we are desirous, in this commodious form, to communicate it to many, who have not the opportunity or the inclination to peruse a more bulky narrative. Whatever may be thought or expressed of this extraordinary character by the votaries of faction, such a complete cavalier as Bennet Langton, a competent judge, and one of the most ingenious of his contemporaries, would, with a perfect pencil, and not a tint of exaggeration, paint Johnson to the life, as a most virtuous and pious man, generous, affable, affectionate, and brave; a profound scholar, an admirable converser, a pure, eloquent, and most energetick writer, a dextrous logician, an acute critick, and a sublime poet. Nor would a Langton omit other and prominent features, open, bold, and striking. He would depict him as the *moral mentor of the age;* as a sincere believer in the Christian faith, as the steadfast friend to loyalty and truth, and the sturdy foe of faction and infidelity. He would finish such a picture, not without a burst of a partizan's enthusiasm, that Johnson was a decided tory, a thorough-paced royalist, and an orthodox high-churchman.

Life of Dr. Johnson.

"——Sibi quivis
Sperit idem: sudet multum, frustraque laboret,
Ausus idem." *Horace.*

All men will try, and hope to write as well,
And not without much pains be undeceived. *Roscommon.*

Samuel Johnson was born at Litchfield, on the 7th of September, Old Style, in the year 1709. His father, Michael Johnson, was of low parentage, was a native of Cubley, in Derbyshire, and at the birth of the subject of our memoir, resided at Litchfield, and carried on the business of a country bookseller, by attending, on market days, at all the neighbouring towns. He was nevertheless a man of much information: was a decent classical scholar, and lived in such a state of respectability that he was made one of the magistrates of that city. His mother's name was Sarah Ford; she had descended from a respectable family in Warwickshire, and was the sister of Dr. Joseph Ford, an eminent physician, and father of Cornelius Ford, the celebrated Chaplain to Lord Chesterfield. Mrs. Johnson possessed a considerable share of understanding, and was much respected for her piety and prudence. They did not marry till they were advanced in years, and they had only another son, named Nathaniel, who after succeeding to the business of his father, died in 1737, in the 25th year of his age. Samuel also had an uncle, named Andrew, who for some years kept the ring appropriated for boxers in Smithfield.

From an unclean nurse, or perhaps from hereditary derivation, he was afflicted with the disease called the King's Evil, and the Jacobites, which principles his father possessed, believing in the efficacy of royal contact, his mother, when he was two years old, presented him before Queen Anne, who, for the first time performed the office of the touch, and gave to the patient all the healing virtue which she was capable of imparting. But the disease was too obstinate to yield even to more potent remedies; he was afterwards cut for the relief of that scrophulous humour, but the operation only disfigured his countenance, which was naturally harsh and rugged, impaired his hearing, and deprived him of the sight of his left eye.

Having acquired the first rudiments of education at Litchfield, under Tom Brown, the authour of a spelling book, he began at eight years of age, to learn Latin at the free-school of that city, and though he was not remarkable for diligence or application, he in less than two years, was taken from the undermaster by the head-master, Mr. Hunter, who made him a pupil of his own. Among his schoolfellows were Dr. James the inventor of the Fever Powder; and Mr. Lowe, Canon of Windsor.

There is no doubt that his progress under the abovementioned gentleman was considerable, though Johnson describes him as "wrongheadedly severe;" for at the age of fifteen he was removed to a still higher school, at Stourbridge, in Worcestershire, where he obtained a complete knowledge of classical literature. He seems to have figured there in the double capacity of usher and scholar; repaying the information he acquired from the master, Mr. Wentworth, by giving instructions to the junior pupils.—He describes this gentleman as unreasonably severe; and in his correspondence with Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, he thus discriminates between his progress at each of the schools. "At one I learnt much

in the school, but little from the master: in the other I learnt much from the master, but little in the school."

After remaining upwards of a year at Stourbridge, he returned to his father, and when he had attained the age of nineteen, he was patronized by Mr. Andrew Corbett, a gentleman of Shropshire, who proposed to maintain him at Oxford, in the capacity of companion to his son. He was accordingly entered as a commoner of Pembroke College, in October 1728; but Mr. Boswell, on the authority of Dr. Taylor, asserts that he never derived the least advantage from his patron.

His favourite studies at College were ethicks, theology, and classical literature; and though he was generally reserved in his demeanour, he frequently gave proofs of his extensive reading, by quoting in controversial conversations, such a variety of passages from obscure ancient authours, as convinced his auditors, that he possessed a memory unusually retentive.

A remarkable anecdote is related of Johnson, while at College, which strongly proves the brilliancy of his talents. The 5th of November being then kept with great solemnity, it was usual for each student to deliver in an exercise upon that subject. Johnson having neglected the performance of this duty, composed instead of it some verses, entitled *Somnum*, the subject of which was, that the muse had appeared to him in his sleep and asserted, "that it did not become him to write on such abstruse points, but that he should confine himself to humbler themes." The versification was considered to be so truly Virgilian that Mr. Jordan his tutor, solicited him to translate Pope's Messiah into Latin hexameter verse, as a Christmas exercise. This task he performed with such uncommon rapidity and elegance, that he gained the applause of the whole university: and Pope is reported to have said, that "the authour would leave it a question with posterity whether the Latin or the English were the original." While at college he had a great inclination for the reading of Greek:—he also projected a commonplacebook, to the extent of six folio volumes; but Sir John Hawkins asserts, that by far the greater portion of it consisted of blank leaves.

While at Litchfield, during the college vacation he was overwhelmed with "morbid melancholy" to such a degree as to render his life miserable. He fancied himself in a state of approaching insanity, and with this idea he drew up an account of his situation in Latin, and sent it to his godfather, Dr. Swinfen, of Litchfield.—Mr. Boswell asserts, that this statement displayed not only an uncommon vigour of fancy and taste, but of judgment. From this dismal malady it appears he never after perfectly recovered.

His religious progress is of importance. He had been instructed at an early age in the doctrines of the Church of England by his mother, who used to confine him on Sundays, and make him read the "Whole Duty of Man;" but her strictness only caused in him an inattention to religion, and in and after his fourteenth year he was a talker against it. On going to Oxford he read by chance Law's "Serious Call to the Unconverted;" when instead of finding it a dull book, as he expected, he declares it was an overmatch for him, and became the first occasion of his

thinking in earnest of religion.—Afterwards those tenets of our Church which are most nearly allied to Calvinism were congenial to his feelings, and they were confirmed by his habits for the remainder of his life.

In the year 1730, Mr. Corbett quitted the university, and his father declined contributing any farther to Johnson's maintenance than paying for his commons; while the remittances from his own family were so scanty and irregular, that he could no longer make a decent external appearance.—In short, his shoes were so much decayed, that his feet appeared through them; yet so averse was he to being considered as an object of eleemosynary contribution, that a new pair having been placed at his door by an unknown hand, he indignantly flung them away.

At this period of his distress he seemed indifferent to fame, and according to Dr. Percy, "he might be seen lounging at the college gate, with a circle of young students, whom he was entertaining with his wit, and keeping from their studies, if not spiriting them up to rebellion against the college discipline, which in his maturer years he so much extolled."

For another year he continued to struggle under all the disadvantages of poverty: and professed a desire to practise either of the civil or common law; but his debts increasing, in consequence of his remittances from Litchfield having failed altogether, by the insolvency of his father, he was compelled to quit the college in the autumn of 1731. He had resided at it little more than three years, which circumstance prevented him from obtaining a settlement, from which at a future period of his life he might have derived a subsistence.

On returning to Litchfield the knowledge of his talents procured him a kind reception in several of the most respectable families at that place.

In December, 1731, his father died in the 79th year of his age; when after his mother was provided for, the portion of the effects which fell to his share amounted only to 20*l.*

He then found himself obliged to accept the situation of usher in the school of Market Bosworth, in Leicestershire, to which he travelled on foot; he resided in the house of the patron of the school, Sir W. Dixie who treated him with intolerable harshness; and this situation proved the most irksome to him of any which he met with in the course of his existence.

Having relinquished this employment, he went on a visit to Mr. Hector, of Birmingham, who had been his school-fellow, and here he performed his first literary work, which was a translation from the French of "*Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia.*" It was published in 1735, by Bettesworth and Hicks, of Paternoster-row; and for this task Johnson received only five guineas.

In August 1734, he published proposals for printing by subscription the Latin Poems of Politian, but for want of encouragement the work never made its appearance, though it was to consist of thirty octavo sheets, for the small price of five shillings. In the same year being hardly driven to procure subsistence, he wrote under the name of S. Smith, to Mr. Cave, the proprietor of the Gentleman's Magazine, proposing "on reasonable terms," to supply him with a variety of literary matter, never printed before. Mr. Cave answered his letter, but it does not appear

that any advantage at that time resulted from it.

(To be Continued.)

For The Port Folio.

CRITICISM.

"*The Lay of An Irish Harp, or Metrical Fragments by Miss Owenson. London printed, Philadelphia re-printed and published by T. S. Manning*, 1307, *pp.* 180."

This is the age of literary females. With authours in petticoats, England has been long overrun; from Mrs. Carter, the grave, and my Lady Montague, the gay, down to *Molly* Hays and Molly Woolstonecraft, who, like Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Bellamy, Mrs. Baddely, and Constantia Philips have actually established a sort of Frail Sisterhood in Literature.

But the young lady, who has now set before us her metrical fragments, is not exactly of the same classification with some of the intrepid matrons abovementioned. Miss Owenson is, we understand, a very honest woman, who has been carefully educated, and however, as may appear in the sequel, she may indulge herself in the naughtiness of the heart, she takes care to keep the naughtiness of man at a pretty respectful distance. She seems to be a very cheerful, chirping, rattling, prattling, giddy kind of a good-humoured girl, who sits down, after a glass or two of Irish claret, to talk rather tediously, about *Wild Irish* spinsters, and *Novices of Saint Dominick*. On their first appearance, the sight of these bulky romances, terrified us nearly as much as the twelve tomes of Celia or Cassandra, or the everlasting *babblement* of that prig, Richardson. We ventured, however, to dip here and there, and immediately felt ourselves afflicted by a sensation of suffocation or strangling, from the choaking length of some of her periods, and a degree of verbosity, of which the noisiest Hibernian lawyer might be ashamed. Nor was this all. She contrives, with the most indefatigable malice, to *bore* her unhappy readers with everlasting descriptions, most servilely copied after Mrs. Radcliffe, which serve for no other purpose than to remind us that we have seen the ocean and all its gulls, and the moon and seven stars painted over and over again, many years ago, and painted incomparably better. Men are disgusted with sign-post likenesses, after having contemplated the animated canvas of Sir Peter Lely and Sir Joshua Reynolds.

But our business is not with the fashionable romances of this lively damsel. We are now to examine with what degree of skill she touches her *Harp*, and whether her Lay resembles the melody of Moore, or that harsher note so aptly denominated the Irish *howl*.

The volume opens, with due pomp, by a dedication to Joseph Atkinson, Esq. Treasurer of the Ordinance in Ireland, &c. This gentleman of literary habits and munificent temper, is the Mæcenas, the Montague, the Dorset of Ireland. He appears to be a general patron, and, as we are well assured, he is fully entitled to the compliments, with which he is adorned by the wits, his contemporaries. But the whole park of that artillery, over which this gentleman is the tutelary genius, would hardly produce such a deafning sound as the salute of this dedication. "In the rites of heathen piety," Miss Owenson solemnly remarks, "we are told, that a *dove* was propitiously re-

ceived, where the ability of the votarist was *inadequate to a hecatomb!* Suffer me then, to believe, that in friendship, as in religion, the motive, not the value of an offering, propitiates its acceptance!"

After this, Miss Owenson's *dove* may fly anywhere, and we should not be surprized to discover this fugitive fowl sometimes perched on Noah's ark, and sometimes on the top of the Andes. After a short, but solemn pause, she proceeds: "At some distant day, I might solicit your attention to some less idle vision; but the ardour of gratitude spurns the cold delay of protracted intention, while its feelings call for an immediate avowal. I have therefore seized on this opportunity," &c. This is a splendid specimen of the superfine style, and yet so perfectly feminine in its character, that of one hundred letters, or essays, which we might, in any assigned or assignable year, receive from writing women, or waiting women, upwards of ninety of the aforesaid letters would contain divers periods after the same pretty pattern.

After this dedication, marches, with a very prim step, something, which old-fashioned authours would call a preface; but which by the Wild Irish Girl is oddly baptized a *Prefatory Sketch*. We are here, very abruptly, hurried into the company of Greeks and Romans, Moors, Spaniards, and Italians, for the sake of being informed, that all these people practised Horace's advice of *Desipere in loco*. This sketch is finished in the following tawdry manner. "It were, perhaps, politick to anticipate the severity of criticism by candidly acknowledging the too frequent admission of French quotations. But if there are many elegant trifles in English Poetry, either the paucity of my reading, or the treachery of my memory prevented my claims on their assistance; while the *poetical badiers* of France came "skipping rank and file," to my aid, and illustrated MY (LESS felicitous) trifles by theirs, in a language, which above every other is constructed

"D'eterniser la bagatelle."

"Did this little volume aspire to any class of literature, I would rank it among the last and least of those *bagatelles* to which I have alluded; for the fragments it contains, were written at distant periods, and in those careless intervals of life, when judgment no longer breathes the *Qui va la* to Fancy! when feeling is inspiration, and when the mind, too desultory for narrative composition, or too indolent for connected detail, resigns itself to the impulse of transient emotion, and gives back to the heart some simple, but endeared image, the heart's own feelings had supplied."

This is a sweet mouthful of moonshine, which it is unnecessary for us to recommend to boarding-school misses, *child's-maids*, smirking sempstresses, milliners' apprentices, *et id genus omne*, all of whom, from the creation of the world to the present hour, if they can possess themselves of a skewer of a pen, and a fragment of paper, trace exactly such mystical characters as the above. From the days of Moses, until this present glorious year of our independence, no *man* ever wrote in such a style, which is as remote from the manner of Addison and Goldsmith, as the sweet simplicity of a British Cottage differs from the fantastick proportions of a Chinese Pagoda.

Having thus rapidly run over this young woman's prose, we now

come up undauntedly to her poetry. Her first fragment begins with asking three questions very abruptly:

Why sleeps the Harp of Erin's pride?
Why withering droops its shamrock wreath?
Why has that song of sweetness died,
Which Erin's Harp alone can breathe?

To this poetical inquisitiveness, as no sort of reply is made, Miss Sidney goes on, and tacks an exclamation to her interrogative:

Oh! 'twas the simplest, wildest thing!
The sighs of Eve, that faintest flow
On airy lyres, did never fling
So sweet, so sad, a song of wo.

And yet its sadness seemed to borrow
From love or joy a mystick spell;
'Twas doubtful still if bliss or sorrow
From its melting lapses fell;

For if, amid its tone's soft languish,
A note of love or joy e'er streamed,
'Twas the plaint of love-sick anguish,
And still the "joy of grief," it seemed.

This is a little in the manner of Moore, but then it is his *worst* manner. The phrase *simplest, wildest thing*, very naturally reminds us of a gamesome hoyden, who at an early age, sometimes prefers the studies of a sampler, to the romping with boys. We leave it to musical doctors, to distinguish between the gay and the plaintive tones of her harp, and confess that we are such miserable metaphysicians as to be wholly incapable of analyzing *the joy of grief*, a phrase fully equivalent to the rapture of the rack, or the anguish of delightfulness.

(*To be continued.*)

For The Port Folio.

LAW INTELLIGENCE.

William Stallman } *Common Pleas Phila.*
v. } *Co. Nov.* 8. 1808.
Charles Nice. }

This was an appeal by the defendant from the judgment of a Justice of the Peace in favour of the plaintiff.

The facts of the case appeared to be these. During the election in 1805, when Thos. M'Kean and Symon Snyder were rival candidates for the highest political honours of the State of Pennsylvania, the plaintiff betted $20, with the defendant, that the former of the candidates would not be elected by a majority of 3000 votes. Stallman was of course a Snyderite, and it will naturally be supposed that Nice was a M'Keanite: or in other words, that each betted for his favourite: and as it was impossible that a M'Keanite could have confidence in a Snyderite, or *vicê versâ*, it was agreed to *stake* the bets, and that a captain, colonel, major, or general *hold-money*, or hold-*gate*, (or something like it) should *hold* the stake, until the election, *now* rendered vastly momentous to the parties, should be decided. Nice put down the dust like a man; *i. e.* he put his $20 in the safe-keeping of the militia officer, and might have said, Who's afraid? *Stall*man had not the ready rhino, but (whether he raised it by bond, mortgage, or pledge of chattels, *vivum vadium*, or *mortuum vadium*, was neither proved, nor is it material;) he deposited his $20 with his antagonist, probably (although the precise time did not appear in evidence) a day or two after the bet was made. The *locus in quo* of this interesting transaction was Germantown. It may be readily conceived, that after the bet, Stallman was not backward in *patriotick* exertion, for Simon Snyder, nor Mr. *Nice fastidious* in supporting Mr. M'Kean. The whole world knows, and posterity may know, that Snyder was beaten, and by a majority greater than 3000;

and, if the reports of this reporter be as widely circulated and as carefully preserved as they deserve, the whole world and posterity may know, *that Nice won the bet aforesaid of Stallman*—and that, by a *sequitur*, as logical as any that can be produced from the chapters of Watts or the pages of Duncan. But, "*Gentlemen of the Jury*," Nice did not deposit Stallman's $20 with the militia officer, as it was alleged he ought to have done. Whether it was that he became confident of winning the bet, and did not care to have the trouble of putting this money into the hands of the militia officer, and getting it out of his hands again, or,—but surmises would be vain, because *de non apparentibus, et non existentibus, eadem est ratio*, and no particular motive did appear in evidence—In fact Nice staked Stallman's $ 20 *in his own pocket*, and promptly delivered it to the winner, and afterwards got back his own $ 20 from the militia officer; by which it appears that by the *bet* he was *bet*tered in his temporal affairs to the amount of said $20. Stallman, having made the bet with the expectation of *winning* (in which he felt himself disappointed) and *find*ing that he had *lost* (in which he was greviously mortified) stung with the aforesaid disappointment and mortification, brought his action before a *Justice*, to recover back his $20; and the Justice (who for ought the reporter knows, his name not having been mentioned, may have been a wise and impartial justice) gave judgment for the plaintiff. To this Nice had too much spirit to submit; so he entered his appeal, and *brought* Stallman to a higher tribunal.

As the reporter is no stenographer, or cheirographer, or short-hand-writer, and, *as there was much noise in the court-room*, he will not pretend to trace the arguments of the ingenious counsel of the parties. Nice had employed *two* counsellers, Stallman but *one*, so that at the *start* there were two to one against the latter; but whether it be true in all cases that "in the multitude of counsellers there is safety," will appear in the sequel, which shows how the parties *came out*.

For Stallman it was contended, that betting was immoral, *contra bonos mores*, against sound policy, —that, if it was encouraged, we should become a nation of gamblers, instead of a nation of free and independent citizens—Cases were read from the *English* books to support these points, and it was particularly insisted, that *Nice* had not behaved *nicely* in keeping *Stallman's* $20, instead of paying it over to the militia officer, according to the alleged contract.

E contra it was argued, that "*in pari delicto potior est conditio defendentis:*" that if betting be "*contra bonos mores*," the parties were precisely on the same foot; Stallman was not a whit the better than Nice on the score of morality:—that he who comes to ask justice should come like *Nice*, with *clean* hands, and not like *Stall*man whose hands, figuratively speaking, were those of a *stableman:* that the bet had been fairly lost and fairly won, and, as the defendant had the money, and possession is at least nine (some *dicta* say eleven) points of the law, the courts would not aid the plaintiff in getting it back again:—Besides, it was contended on the honourable principles of *sporting*, that *Stall*man was endeavouring to *draw back* from a bet fairly laid, and that for such dishonourable conduct, the jury ought to scout him out of court.

The learned judge declared it to be the decided opinion of the court, that, upon the soundest principles of policy, a suit could not be sustained for a wager on an election: but if a party bets, and loses and pays his bet, the law will not aid him in recovering it back again. In this case, however, there was some peculiarity: the contract was, that the bets should be staked, and though the plaintiff had given his bet to the defendant it was that it might be staked with the militia officer: that Nice had not staked it agreeably to the contract, and if Stallman had been the winner, he never could have recovered the bet: that in this view they were placed on unequal ground by the conduct or misconduct of Nice, who had not kept the contract, and in that case, Stallman was entitled to have his money returned.

So thought the jury, who found for the plaintiff $20 interest and costs. Judgment *Nisi.*

The jury, it was remarked, were all *Snyderites*, yet Nice did not pray a jury *de medietate*, to which foreigners are entitled by the Common Law or by the Act of Assembly, in such case made and provided. *Quod nota.*

For The Port Folio.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

VERSES

SENT TO A YOUNG LADY WITH A ROSE-BUD.

Depart, thou sweetest flow'r that blows,
And with Eliza, budding rose,
Unfold thy latent bloom;
Adorn the bosom of my fair,
Expand thy blushing beauties there,
And meet in bliss thy doom.

Yet, rose! before thy charms decay,
While glows thy beauty, bright as day,
And all thy charms approve,
Oh! tell Eliza, in an hour
Her charms may fade, like thine, sweet flow'r,
Oh! teach her heart to love.

Then let the blushing fair one see
Resemblance of herself in thee,
A rose-bud of the morn;
But sweetness, beauty, youth combine
With innocence to make her shine
A rose without a thorn!

And when at eve thou droop'st thy head,
And wilt, with all thy beauties dead,
Thy fragrance still retain,
Show her, although thy day is past,
Although thy night approaches fast,
That still thy sweets remain.

Show her, although thy charms are gone,
Which erst in brilliant colours shone,
Thou still hast fragrant breath;
And let her draw this moral thence,
Virtue alone is excellence
Surviving after death.

W. R. S.

SONNET TO HOPE.

Star of the sinking soul! whose distant beams
Cast cheering lustre o'er Despair's dark form,
Delusive sprite of misery's waking dreams,
Whose vivid rays shed solace in wo's storm!
Thou whose deceptive light entic'd my heart,
In search of fancied bliss, with peace to part,
Whose fairy form with rapture once I view'd,
Whose voice once whisper'd, Mary will be kind,
Whose tempting, rose-strew'd path I once pursued,
And left reflection ling'ring far behind.
For love I sighing seek, and find disdain,
But thou, deceiving, bidst me sigh again.
Oh! cease alluring, Hope! sweet balm of care,
Nor feed my passion while I feel despair.

W. R. S.

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